123 While we were camped near Uruyén as many as forty Indian visitors
574 were sometimes present at Uruyén at one time and every structure there was
573 crowded with hammocks, including the wall-less B, although Kamarakotos
784 dislike sleeping without walls, but even under this pressure no one occupied F or G or used them for any purpose.

Food

262 The Kamarakotos will eat practically everything available in their region
433 from which humans can extract any nourishment, but their main reliance is on
241 agriculture. Wild food, plant and animal, plays a valued part in their diet but its failure is not fatal. Cultivated plants are the staple foods, and their failure means starvation. Contrary to the general impression, it is extremely difficult and precarious to live off the country in the tropical jungles and sabanas. The Kamarakotos must be classed as agricultural Indians.

Plant Foods and Farming.

222 Wild plant food is relatively unimportant and forms only an insignificant
262 addition to the Kamarakoto diet. At least four non-poisonous mushrooms are known and eaten. I did not hear of any wild roots or seeds that are commonly eaten. There are a few, surprisingly few, wild fruits that are enjoyed in season, including the fruits of the maripa and moriche palms, called aba'ɔ and kwai respectively, and several sorts of guamos, pods with a sweetish edible pulp surrounding the hard seeds (warwoto, maipa, abira), and the algarrobo (wadɛ) with somewhat similar pods with a powdery edible substance around the seeds. These with a fruit called madɛ that I did not identify are almost all the wild plants that provide food.

241 Cultivated food plants, on the other hand, are numerous and varied. Some plants, food and otherwise, are generally planted more or less at random around the houses, notably gourds, cotton, and pupu (a shrub with spiny leaves and a fleshy fruit that looks like a golden-yellow tomato). Agriculture, properly speaking, is carried out by a system of mixed, temporary farm-patches, a wasteful and inefficient type of farming that has been taken over from the Indians and is common throughout Venezuela where such patches are called "conucos."

241 The Kamarakoto conuco, uma, is invariably located in the forest, but
311 usually near its edge. The reason for this is that the forest has become estab-
● 134 lished wherever there is rich soil leaving only the poor, sandy soil open and
242 grass-covered. At Uruyén the to'ɔ-esa'ɔ, Reyes, in an unusual experimental mood, cleared a patch of sabana and planted casave[107] on it, but when we left

107 [see footnote on p 119, category 116 - Analyst]

241 311 134 242 the experiment seemed to be a failure, the soil being too poor to grow a crop. In this vicinity the sabanas are generally on alluvial terraces, dry and sandy or pebbly, while the forests are on rich soil mainly of decomposed igneous rock.

241 To prepare a conuco, the brush and trees are cut down, the brush piled and burned and the trees, which do not entirely burn, left where they fall (see [462] Fig. 13). This work is done entirely by the men, who use steel axes and machetes for it. Planting is also done by the men,[108] but the scanty cultivation and all the harvesting is done by the women. Casave is planted in hills usually roughly alined and other plants scattered around, with the casave or separately, more or less at random (see Fig. 14).

A conuco is ordinarily abandoned after one year although some products, like bananas, continue to be gathered as long as they bear without further attention. For casave and annuals a new patch is cleared every dry season.

[262] Casave is the staff of life and of course occupies the greater part of the conucos. Chile peppers, of which there are many kinds, are also indispensable and bananas, also varied, perhaps come next in importance. The following plants, including a few not used for food, were seen growing in the several conucos examined in Kamarata:

Casave.
Yams, (etc.). Dioscorea, at least three varieties.
Ocumos, Xanthosoma.
Sweet Potatoes.
Bananas, at least six varieties.
Plantains, at least two varieties.
Squash.
Sugar cane.
Papayas.
Watermelons.
Corn (only one variety seen, but two or three said to occur).
Chile peppers, at least six varieties.
Peanuts.
Black beans.
Pupu (see above).
Cotton.
Tobacco.
[224] Kumi (a plant not eaten but rubbed in cuts for luck in hunting).

241 177 All of these plants are rather surely pre-Columbian in this region, and probably also in this tribe, except bananas, plantains, sugar cane, and watermelons. There seems to be room for a slight doubt regarding bananas and plantains. They are generally believed to have been introduced by Europeans, but if so they spread rapidly and far almost at once after the discovery of America, and spread ahead of the actual penetration of the Europeans. Wild

108 [see footnote on p. 319, category 116 - Analyst]
[text continues on p. 125]